



DEFENDER-Europe 20

Press Release

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

Phone: 0611-143-537-0005 | DSN: (314) 537-0005

www.eur.army.mil/DefenderEurope | USArmyEurope.MediaDesk@mail.mil

DEFENDER-Europe 20 - first US troops reach Poland

WIESBADEN, Germany - On Friday, February the 28th, first two wheeled columns of soldiers and equipment from the US will enter Poland through the Kołbaskowo border crossing. This is the official start of the DEFENDER-Europe 20 exercise in our country.

The columns will include various military vehicles to include High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles, Heavy Equipment Transport (HET) vehicles and other specialized equipment – all bound for Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area. Border crossing is scheduled to commence around 8 PM. Then columns will drive through Szczecin, where on base of 12th Mechanized Brigade, soldiers will refuel vehicles before continuing their way to the designated training ground.

In the following days, several wheeled columns of soldiers and equipment will enter Poland through border crossings in Świecko and Kołbaskowo. Utilizing national roads and highways they will head deeper into the Polish territory. Routes and travel times have been planned to minimize disruption to everyday functioning of residents to the greatest possible extent. There is a chance, however, that on the roads of Lubuskie and Zachodniopomorskie voivodships travelers will be able to meet (and photograph) columns of military vehicles in various periods of the day.

In the following weeks, several thousands of American soldiers and members of allied forces (mainly from Germany and United Kingdom) with equipment will come to Poland. Columns consisting of no more than 20 vehicles will traverse the roads between border crossings and training grounds in the north and east of Poland, they will also head towards Lithuanian border. Most of the heavy combat equipment will arrive by rail and the troops participating in DEFENDER-Europe 20 will also use civilian and military airports.

In total, around 37,000 soldiers will participate in the DEFENDER-Europe 20 exercise and six other linked exercises in April and May. 20,000 of American personnel will be transferred directly from the continental US. The exercise will also involve additional 9,000 US soldiers already stationed in Europe and about 8,000 soldiers from other countries - including almost 3,000 from Poland.

In addition to troops directly involved in the active phase, the Polish Armed Forces will also engage their logistics potential in a total of almost 10,000 soldiers who will be responsible for securing DEFENDER-Europe 20. Poland has extensive experience in conducting such exercises on its territory. The scale of this event requires close cooperation between military and local authorities of regions where this exercise will be conducted.

Host nation support is crucial for our credibility as a partner and ally in NATO. Allied forces coming to Poland will utilize, among others, roads, railways, air and sea infrastructure as well as services such as accommodation or food. Polish military institutions and units will be responsible for securing the transport and movement of troops, providing materials (e.g. fuel), technical and medical supplies, communication, force protection, legal services and activities in many other areas.

As of: March 2, 2020

Exercise DEFENDER-Europe 20 is the largest deployment of US troops from continental United States to Europe in 25 years. The main goal of the exercise is to validate United States Armed Forces' readiness to deploy its personnel and equipment to Europe, and also to test the national support of hosting nations.

DEFENDER-Europe 20 also underlines the determination of the United States of America to defend its European allies and partners. Entrusting Poland with the role of one of the host nations is also an expression of American confidence in Poland as an ally. At the same time, it is a proof of the role played by Poland in the international system of building and strengthening security - both globally and regionally.

Like many other exercises involving NATO allies, DEFENDER-Europe 20 is a defensive exercise and is not aimed against anyone.

More information about DEFENDER-Europe 20 in Poland can be found on: [Caution-www.wojsko-polskie.pl/defender-europe-20](http://www.wojsko-polskie.pl/defender-europe-20).